

BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION MEETING

June 6th and 7th, 2012

Best Western Ramkota Hotel, Aberdeen, SD

Members present: Melissa Flor, Kathy Hassebrook, Craig Eschenbaum, Grady Kickul, Brett Glirbas, Lyle Cook, and Matt Cain. **Members absent:** Elaine Roberts, Robert Kean, Darla McGuire, Carol Kirchgesler, Barb Storbeck, Joe Rehurek, Nikki Darland, and Leo Hallan. **Others present:** Bernie Grimme, Rich Eschenbaum, Doris Lamb, Colette Wagoner, Faith Korkow, Karen Gerety on the 6th, Kim Christensen on the 7th, and Sharon Grote on the 7th.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS: Craig Eschenbaum, Vice-Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1:20 pm. He welcomed everyone to Aberdeen and had people introduce themselves. Staff confirmed there wasn't a quorum and reviewed who was absent. **OPENING ACTIONS:** Craig reminded members of the meeting protocol which was attached to the draft agenda. Next, Craig moved to the draft agenda and asked if there were any additions. Kathy asked to add discussion on the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) and a discussion of timed online job applications. It was agreed that those could be done on Thursday after her ERN update.

Grady mentioned that he had known about the large number of missing members; yet felt it was important to hold the quarterly meeting, since this was planned to coincide with the Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) and consequently a visit with Department of Human Services (DHS) Secretary Laurie Gill.

Time for Public Comment: Kathy wanted to tell members how impressed she was this week with the students attending YLF. She presented a session on interviewing and soft skills and they were attentive, interactive and full of questions. She added that it seemed the facility worked well for their needs. Craig echoed her sentiments, agreeing that they were an interesting and fun group.

Bernie distributed a "Mark Your Calendar" flier (Attachment A) announcing the 2012 RehabACTion Fall VR Conference. He explained the Division is partnering with Transition and Native American VR programs to host, "Oyate Ki Kawita Upi – The

Approved at the September 27 & 28, 2012 Meeting

People Coming Together”, which will be held at the Spearfish Holiday Inn, October 16th – 18th. Speakers will include Geri Jewell, Erin Riehle, Jim Warne, Juan Portley, Rob Hoffman, J.R. LaPlante, and Dr. Thom Flamboe. Grady added that Lyle has been on this planning committee and has been very helpful, adding culturally appropriate sessions. It was noted that as BVR members, conference registration fees and travel expenses would be covered. If interested in attending contact BVR staff.

Staff reported that the National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) theme had been announced – “A Strong Workforce – is an Inclusive Workforce”. More details on NDEAM events will be announced as they become available. Reminder, BVR members are encouraged to get active with planning events in their community. As always, related expenses will be covered if interested in attending.

Staff shared a compilation of public comments gathered during the Disability Services Summit held in Lower Brule on April 26th (Attachment B). This was a collaborative effort between the BVR, Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (BSBVI), Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), Divisions of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) and Rehabilitation Services, SD Advocacy Services, SD Parent Connection, and the Council on Developmental Disabilities. The event went well, and comments were shared with each participating group.

Postsecondary Education Disability Services: Craig introduced Karen Gerety, the Disability Services Coordinator, Office of Disability Services, Northern State University (NSU) in Aberdeen. Karen shared a handout (Attachment C) of the PowerPoint presentation she was going to review. She started by agreeing with earlier statements that YLF is going great this week. They’re a great bunch of kids, adding that it gives her hope because some will come through NSU after high school.

Karen reviewed the admissions process for NSU, stating students with disabilities are admitted same as other students. She mentioned how she attempts to get information into the hands of not only area school counselors, but also VR counselors. Sometimes teenagers need a bit of a push beyond what parents can do, and if it comes from the VR counselor or school counselor it helps to meet the paperwork and registration deadline.

Karen explained that she visits schools in the region to learn about students with disabilities and promotes early planning. She stressed that students need to have current paperwork or documentation regarding their disability. Students must be evaluated with documentation along with needed accommodations outlined. She spoke to a few testing instruments, some for children and some for adults. Students must also apply for services with the Office of Disability Services on campus.

A question was asked if eligibility requirements are the same as VR requirements. Karen replied that they are similar. She sends many students with disabilities to the local VR office for clarification and the VR staff is very helpful. Karen added that she feels there is less stigma for persons with mental health issues and that contributes to more students applying for services. She reported they serve approximately 80 – 90 students per semester, serving students with a wide range of disabilities (i.e. learning disabilities, ADD/ADHD, vision loss, hearing loss, mobility issues, chronic illness, psychiatric issues, and occasionally in older non-traditional students, issues with back injuries and carpal tunnel).

Brett mentioned that in Sioux Falls, they had a “priority registration” for note takers who assist with classroom notes for other students with disabilities in classrooms. Karen replied that she didn’t think NSU had that, but it was a good idea to suggest to the Registrar’s Office. She explained that when they have students placed in classes, they attempt to get class details (syllabus, notes, or homework requirements) from the professors. Another resource that helps students include math and writing centers, supplemental instruction and tutoring, and student support services.

Other ways to assist students with disabilities could include providing a quiet, interruption free zone for test taking, or providing an ergonomically correct chair for a student’s disability, interpreter service, or providing extra time to take a test. Many things can be accomplished by finding creative ways to assist people.

Karen mentioned NSU’s extensive tutoring available for students with disabilities who may require more time to learn complex subjects. Supplemental Instruction (SI) is quite common, and they stress to students to start with programs at the beginning of the semester, and not wait until they’ve fallen behind.

The Student Support Services (SSS) Program is a federally funded program that has three main requirements: must be a first generation student to ever attend a postsecondary education institute, must meet the income guidelines, and/or be a student with a disability. This program can provide tutorial services, academic, financial or personal counseling, assistance completing any application, career choice counseling, financial aid, and mentoring.

Karen continued by sharing the Office of Disability Services, also has the Office of Student Success, which is a referral center for faculty and staff who have concerns about students; the Counseling and Career Center; the Multi-Cultural Affairs Center, and the Discovery Program, which is for students who are in recovery from alcohol or other drugs.

Karen added that occasionally issues involve acquiring current and appropriate documentation on the student's disability, and this requires a strong partnership with VR counselors. Another tricky area is serving students with disabilities at their satellite campuses in Pierre, Huron, and Sioux Falls. Again, staying open-minded and coming up with creative, cost effective ways to help serve students' needs is key.

She mentioned student stories with successful outcomes. A student with a learning disability attended NSU; the VR office was helpful with determining the most appropriate assistive technology to aid learning. This student has graduated from college and is now teaching special education; and presents at events such as Catch the Wave and Youth Leadership Forum. Another student they served utilized a wheelchair and had limited fine motor skills. Through VR assistance, they were able to provide scribe assistance and this student successfully completed their courses. A student with autism came to NSU requesting a few accommodations. It didn't take much for the Office of Disability Services to provide, yet it meant everything to that one student, who has maintained a very high GPA and is expected to graduate soon.

Karen mentioned more details on their programs or admission process are referenced in the handout. She encouraged members to contact her with any further questions or if they would like to put a student in touch with her. Karen thanked the Board for this

opportunity to share the good work that is happening with students with disabilities at NSU.

Grady thanked Karen and added how all the programs in our state such as Catch The Wave, Project Skills, YLF, and now Project Search – are making an important difference in the lives of young students who have the skillset to move on to a postsecondary education. Karen added that she feels that the voice of the consumer is heard and actually listened to in SD. Again, she thanked DRS and all their VR offices for the assistance they continually provide them and their students. Grady gave Karen a final thank you for NSU agreeing to host the YLF this year. It is a large event that takes much preparation and planning, and the use of their facility is appreciated. Craig thanked Karen for her time, knowing she had been very busy at YLF this week.

DIVISION DIRECTOR'S REPORT -

Director's Comments: Grady took this opportunity to introduce Doris Lamb, the District Supervisor of the Aberdeen VR office. This is her one year anniversary of being a supervisor, and wanted to thank her for her good work. He asked permission for Doris to provide an overview of her duties and any other information; and permission granted.

Doris explained that she oversees nine counselors and four support staff in the Aberdeen VR District. She has been working with the Transition Learning Center for students with disabilities, which is a partnership between Presentation College and the Aberdeen Central High School. She works with the National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) planning committee that's organizing the event this fall with keynote speaker, John Robinson. Doris added that she's proud that all but one of the Aberdeen VR counselors have received their Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC) certificates. She said they collaborate closely with the Native American 121 VR programs serving individuals using both programs. She said that Native American consumers have the choice between the state agency or the 121 program, or a combination of both programs. For example, Mike Hegg, an Aberdeen VR counselor drives up to Sisseton every Thursday and has a standing agreement to work out of an office meeting with consumers.

Bernie added that the Aberdeen VR office is in a great location and is co-located with other agencies, such as the CSD, SBVI, and DakotaLink, which makes it easier to work out creative solutions for consumers.

Grady moved on and explained that both the Board appointments and the Governor's Awards recommendations have passed through his office and are at the Governor's office awaiting action and approval. When word is received from Governor Daugaard, staff will forward details on the awards ceremony date.

Grady reminded members that on tomorrow's agenda is a visit from the Department of Human Services Secretary, Laurie Gill. She'll speak about her role, how it's been going to date, goals for the department, and taking questions from members. He asked to please ensure the meeting moves in a timely manner to ensure we're ready for her, since the YLF luncheon follows immediately.

Grady reported that in April the Division submitted proposed changes to administrative rules for the due process in Vocational Rehabilitation program and the attendant care program. Written comments were welcomed until May 17th. On May 29th changes were presented to the Interim Rules Committee and were passed unanimously. Changes include:

1. The State Personal Attendant program application is being repealed because the program no longer accepts new people. This program is funded with state general funds. Persons currently on the program will remain on it until they no longer need it. Currently twelve people are on this program.
2. Personal Attendant hourly limits under the State program will change to a cap of 42 hours a week, the same cap as the ADLS program utilizes.
3. Another proposed change is to the Vocational Rehabilitation administrative rules relating to due process. In the past, many of the rules revolved around 90 day timeframes, which led to consumers missing hearings and delaying the process. Changes will implement time frames between selected processes (i.e., review, mediation, and hearing) and improve the entire due process procedures.

The Interim Rules Committee approved these changes at their May 29th meeting. Grady thanked members for helping provide changes and language updates; noting

that Robert Kean was especially knowledgeable on the review process and provided feedback.

Next, Grady reported that a survey was released last week. It was a collaborative effort between the Board of Regents, the SD School for the Blind and the SD School for the Deaf. It went via mail to 400 parents of children ages birth to 21, who are deaf or hard of hearing. It is a 45 question survey modeled after the Office of Special Education Indicator 14 survey. Questions are being asked about demographics, education, family dynamics, trainings, and social/emotional issues of children with hearing loss. This had come about through a steering committee and meetings with the Governor following the recent closing of the SD School for the Deaf.

Grady would like staff to send a copy to all BVR members. He also asks members to please look for the two press release notices that will be circulating and attempt to share this survey with as many parents as possible. Hard copies of the survey will be disseminated by mail, and there is an 800 number to call to complete the survey over the phone. Grady stated that we have the entire summer to promote the survey and gather results. After the initial push, there are plans to phone some parents that they are hoping to hear from, if they haven't already. The hope is for a strong response to help the state make informed decisions regarding the future direction of deaf education. He explained that funds from the Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) are covering the survey expenses. Grady specifically thanked Marge Kaiser and Elaine Roberts for their work on this project.

Grady moved to his next topic, a pilot program, Project Endeavor, which Nikki Darland has reported on before. Communications Services for the Deaf (CSD) had a two-year grant to provide broadband internet services to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and low income. This was to implement a nationwide marketing initiative, and to provide technology training and public access to videophones. CSD had named this "Project Endeavor". They offered discounted, or even free, broadband Internet access to persons with disabilities. CSD and this program have spent down their allotted funds and it will end June 30th. It has been decided by the Public Utilities Commission, that the state will use some of the TRS reserves to fund this program. The Division will use Lifeline Link Up through the phone companies and provide subsidized phone rebates of 50% to persons who are deaf or hard of hearing on a 15 month pilot program. The

Division was asked to come up with creative ways to spend TRS funds which were earmarked for serving individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and this pilot program was a perfect fit.

Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) On-Site Visit: Grady reminded members that at the March meeting they heard about the RSA on-site review and visited with Charles Sadler, RSA Staff. Sadler and his team were on-site May 14th - 17th. The last on-site review was conducted in 2007 and that had a stakeholder focus. This most recent review focused on “compliance” in regard to organizational structure, transitional services, employment outcomes – collaboration and indicators, and fiscal integrity. The process involved numerous conference calls prior to their arrival. While here, they interviewed 55 people, Melissa Flor and Ann Larson, Special Education staff were included. An exit interview was held and it was explained that a first draft of “Findings and Recommendations” report could be expected July 2nd. Grady explained a finding as something you’re “required” to do and a recommendation is you’re “encouraged” to do. As the reports become available, they will be shared with members.

Grady stated he felt the review went well, there will be some small changes encouraged but nothing drastic. Grady thanked members who contributed in the RSA interview and supporting the Division.

DRS Budget Update: Grady announced that the FY 2013 DRS budget is a bit over \$21 million. The budget for case services is \$5,109,505 - which is \$500,000 less than last year due to the stimulus funds that are gone. He noted this budget will be tight and indicated a need to watch it closely. Grady also noted though that the Division received a provider inflationary increase of 1.5%.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) Update: Grady reported that the SILC met May 8th in Fort Pierre. SILC members approved spending of Strategic Planning funds approving \$1,000 for 2012 Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) in Aberdeen; \$2,000 towards support of the 2012 Dare to Dream Conference in Spearfish; and \$2,000 for Western Resources for dis-ABLED Independence (WRDI) for website development.

Earlier in April, the SILC sponsored the annual Centers for Independent Living (CIL) Staff Training in Fort Pierre. The three centers – ILC, WRDI and NAAP sent staff for training, adding team building skills. This year's focus was on mental health first-aid, a first-responder type approach to mental health issues and strategies for dealing with a variety of situations. Other SILC meeting agenda items included presentations on homelessness, domestic violence and the Civil Rights Conference held in Sioux Falls. Grady added that the next SILC meeting will be at the AmericInn of Fort Pierre, on Tuesday, September 12th.

State Workforce Development Council (Council): Grady stated that the Council approves funding for adult education to about 9 agencies, totaling \$1,475,000. Going to places such as Southeast Technical Institute, Black Hills Career Learning Center, Cornerstones, etc. One project this money will go towards is the changing of the General Education Diploma (GED) Test which will require a little higher standard and correspond more accurately with other graduation requirements. When the Council meets next in July, it is on their agenda to do some detailed review on the Unified State Plan. They will discuss submitting an integrated plan vs. the Unified State Plan. This will have no impact on the Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan.

STATE PLAN SUBMISSION PROCESS - Bernie spoke to the State Plan Document as the official document reported to RSA on how the Division has done the past year. Similar to last year, the Division is required to submit six attachments requiring annual updates. He continued and reviewed the handout with timelines (see attachment) i.e. posting draft copies, public meetings, etc. He provided copies of the draft attachments as well. In May, the attachments were reviewed by the Consumer Services Committee – Elaine, Carol, Lyle, Brett, Darla, and Robert. The updated draft will be presented to the State Workforce Development Council for consideration and approval and submitted to RSA before the end of the month. Bernie reminded members these can be reviewed anytime at <http://dhs.sd.gov/drs/>. Suggestions or other edits can be forwarded to him by the end of next week.

Consumer Services Committee Review Update: Bernie explained how the committee reviewed a draft survey for community support providers to help identify

specific training needs and discussed factors which seem to hold them back from attending trainings. This survey would be conducted on a website called, Survey Monkey. There will also be a survey directed towards VR counselors. Bernie added that Elaine inquired about having more about Person Centered Thinking (PCT) or People Planning Together (PPT) types of questions, but figured it best to hold off on that and have more help identifying those training needs. He said some providers want training on enclaves, and workshops, yet that is not a direction VR wants to go. The Division feels it would be beneficial to have trainings on topics such as job development or competency-based placement. The PLANS workgroup has talked about these topic areas, as well as the Alliance for Full Participation (AFP) and the Core Stakeholders group. For now, the Division is asking for more direction from the BVR on how to proceed for future trainings impacting providers.

Craig thanked Bernie for the reports. Due to the time remaining, it was the general consensus of members to jump forward to a line item on the next day's agenda, the Proposed Slate of Officers.

Proposed Slate of Officers: Grady explained that on behalf of the Executive Committee, he had been asked to bring forward the following Proposed Slate of Officers for the Board's consideration:

- Elaine Roberts - Chairperson 2nd term
- Craig Eschenbaum - Vice-Chairperson 2nd term
- Brett Glirbas - Member At Large 2nd term

These individuals are currently serving in these capacities. It will stand until the next meeting when there is a quorum available for voting. Nominations for each position will be taken from the floor as well.

Craig adjourned for the afternoon. Staff reminded members of the YLF activities this evening and gave location details.

Friday, June 8th: Craig Eschenbaum, Vice-Chairperson, reconvened the BVR meeting at 8:30 AM, welcomed everyone and had people introduce themselves.

Transition Learning Campus (TLC): Craig introduced Sherron Grote, Special Education Director at Aberdeen Central High School. Sherron thanked the group for asking her to present today.

Sherron explained that Aberdeen Central High School entered into a partnership with Presentation College to create a unique program for students with disabilities who desire independence. This became the Transition Learning Campus or TLC. This is an option for students 18-21 years old who want to work towards post-secondary educational goals, it provides a college atmosphere with same-age peers who can be crucial to social growth and the opportunity to transition to adulthood using continued education, work experience and leisure experience. She added that this collaboration opportunity had first been offered to NSU, but they didn't have the room. They were pleased when Presentation acted quickly to help.

Sherron explained that eligible students have been on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and completed classes required to graduate. It's common that students attend TLC for two years, but some attend only one year. She explained that in the beginning, they offered open enrollment, but No Child Left Behind (NCLB) restricted the rules and this decreased enrollment.

While there, students may live on campus, if approved, or live at home or off-campus, if suitable. To live on campus, they must have independent living skills and the ability to get along with roommates. Cleaning skills and other social skills are a part of the TLC curriculum. Expectations for students are similar to what's expected from all students (i.e. fill their evenings and weekends, do homework, and make simple meals or go to the dining hall). They must also cover the cost of their own meals while at TLC.

TLC offers courses over and above what is offered through Presentation College (PC). Sherron said courses determined by the Student's IEP Team could include: Job and Transition, Work Experience, Consumer Math, Life Science, and Leisure and Recreation skills. All students take at least one regularly offered college class through PC. Public schools provide \$350 for classes per student each year. PC charges TLC students \$150 per credit hour, or \$50 per course audit hour. If they choose to exceed those

amounts, the student pays the balance. The cost is approximately \$4,000 per semester for an average course load.

PC provides two certificate programs for TLC students. They can take 17 hours of college credit in Computers or Health to receive a certificate of completion. TLC recently finished their 7th year. Twelve students will be coming in with three out of the district (Wolsey, Clark and Redfield). It was explained that 15 students is about the maximum they can handle.

Sherron added that they have hired a new teacher to coordinate the TLC program – Jessica Lamb, who enjoys working in the transition field. Another key player is Cindy Kirschmann from the Transition Services Liaison Project. Also involved is Laura Stoltenburg, VR Staff member, who does a great job helping students identify accommodation needs to meet their employment related goals.

Grady said they know there is much interest in this transition area, and that every year at legislature, they hear from interested groups about the need for more funding. A common reply is – use the existing infrastructure available and collaborate or partner more often to get the results wanted. TLC is an excellent example, we see it happening here and it is working. Grady thanked all parties involved. He posed the question, how can VR help this grow beyond the Aberdeen area, we have a great model to follow. Bernie explained that there are similar programs in Rapid City and Sioux Falls for 18 – 21 year olds with disabilities, but they lack the dormitory arrangement.

Grady added that Secretary Gill is working with Jack Warner of the Board of Regents, and she can plant the seed of TLC's success and hopefully expand these efforts to other parts of the state.

A member inquired how can students, counselors, or parents from outside the Aberdeen District learn more. Sherron replied that all VR offices are aware of TLC and would have the contact information to share. This program has the potential to grow beyond the maximum, because Dr. Harms, Aberdeen District Superintendent, has indicated, if the need grows, we'll grow with it. Grady said he feels the Board could

work with Bernie and Melissa Flor to promote the TLC program to others who work with students with disabilities.

Grady and Craig thanked Sherron Grote for her time today and the information. She in turn, thanked members for having her, saying she's always proud to promote the TLC program and toot their horn.

Grady announced that he received notice that DHS Secretary Gill left Pierre, and is running late. She will not make it in time for her visit with the Board today, and extended her regrets. The group traveling will make it to the YLF Legislative Panel and Luncheon. Grady asked staff to add Secretary Gill again as a possible item to the next meeting, which will probably be in the Pierre/Fort Pierre area.

EMPLOYER RESOURCE NETWORK (ERN) UPDATE: Kathy Hassebrook explained that ERN is transitioning into all areas of diversity, including the disability aspect. All SHRM Chapters statewide now have access to, and are getting signed up to use these resources. She can tell it is getting looked at because people are asking a lot of questions. She added that at the SHRM State Convention she promoted ERN and is hearing positive comments from members of the State SHRM Board. Although trying to pull back, Kathy explained she will remain active with ERN and will keep members informed of their progress.

National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC):— Kathy explained that she knows of questions arising regarding this certificate. It appears that in the Aberdeen area, employers are sifting through employment applications and turning away applicants with anything less than the "Gold Standard". She asked if others are aware of this, and asked if testing procedures are discriminatory, and if this is legal? She added that she knows that the GATB was deemed discriminatory, and asked if this testing process was similar? She voiced a concern for having heard through the employment grapevine that persons with disabilities are not being given proper accommodations to take the NCRC, and asked what are allowable accommodations?

Bernie explained that in the early '80's, the Department of Labor (DOL) promoted the use of its General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB) to state employment services. When

an agency is trying to recruit people for jobs, it's helpful to have a way to rate skills and qualifications. The GATB was developed over 60 years ago and was meant to rank people in different skillset categories. Unfortunately, there was proof that African-Americans scored significantly below Caucasians, and Hispanics scored in between. Hiring based on these raw test scores was inconsistent with the government's newer affirmative action goals. Unfortunately scores were adjusted according to race in feeble attempts to even things out, and eventually the practice was challenged and the GATB was deemed as discriminatory and unlawful.

Bernie added that the NCRC tests a person's "aptitude to learn a job" and does not rate actual skills, but the ability to learn. He feels there is a night and day difference when comparing this to the GATB. He said that as far as not being given necessary accommodations, perhaps a person with a hidden disability didn't request an accommodation; or possibly it was about lack of office space – just two guesses for now. Another member said she heard that the NCRC is supposed to provide the same accommodation levels as the ACT testing environment would.

Doris Lamb added that the NCRC test offers a pre-test, and then the person has the chance to study online, and take it again. It was also said that there are not high numbers of people taking the NCRC yet in our state.

Bernie added that it is odd that Aberdeen employers are holding out for "gold" NCRC recipients anyway, since Platinum is the highest. DOL says that about 2% of test takers receive Platinum; 10% reach Gold, and then the vast majority, 88% are Silver or Bronze. He also said that DOL has proven many jobs do not need a Gold certified person in those positions. Kathy wondered if employers really understood the different levels and asked if there is a need for more education among employers. It was mentioned that in the Yankton want-ads, employers advertise using phrases such as, *"NCRC Silver preferred"*.

Grady agreed it sounds like something needs to be done and he suggested staff arrange for DOL staff to provide an update on the NCRC, it's current status and intended use, and how accommodations are being made for testing purposes. It also

raised the question regarding the knowledge or expertise of staff working with people with disabilities.

Next Kathy spoke about hearing of online job applications being timed and how applicants are being “timed out” and getting disconnected and asked if this is legal? Can they screen an applicant’s abilities in this manner by limiting their time online? Are there accommodations that can be made to assist persons with disabilities during an online job application procedure, and if so, what are they? Do we know of any major employers doing this, or doing it properly?

Grady acknowledged that this topic has been brought up a few times now in different conversations. Last he knew Robert Kean was investigating some of these reports for the Board and we should wait for his return to see where things are at. Staff reported that Robert is looking into these types of situations and asking national counter-parts questions regarding these scenarios. Staff asked permission to “switch hats”, and permission was granted. She explained that the SD Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities had an article regarding on-line applications in their last newsletter. She knows that Robert Kean and Shelly Pfaff are collaborating efforts and they are looking into these stories seeking further details. Grady suggested we wait until the next meeting to hear further from Robert and go from there. Kathy thanked everyone for their attention to this important matter, adding that it proves discrimination can easily occur anywhere and everywhere.

RECOGNITION OF FUTURES’ GRADUATES: Bernie reminded members that the Futures Workgroup is a leadership training initiative within the Division that is designed to assist employees gain the necessary skills to advance their careers or simply to do a better, more well-rounded job. He added that the first group to go through Futures had five advance through the program. This year three more are advancing through the program, all from the Aberdeen office, while two others – Ronda Williams of Pierre, and Steve Resick of Chamberlain, are newer to the training. Another staff member finishing is Laura Stoltenburg, but she was unable to attend today. Bernie said he had a list of her Futures’ accomplishments, such as attending BOP Supervisor Training modules, interviewed with the Aberdeen Youth Focus Group and the Transition program. Bernie continued saying Laura has been active with the Aberdeen Area Adult

Youth Services, TLC program, annual NDEAM area events, Aberdeen SHRM chapter, and working with Kathy Hassebrook and Dan Rounds, on the ERN project. Congratulations to Laura Stoltenburg on all her efforts and in her absence today, Bernie will ensure she gets her gift.

Next, Bernie brought forward and introduced, Doris Lamb, District Supervisor for the Aberdeen Area VR Office. Doris thanked the Board for having her here today. She explained that she's always enjoyed broadening her horizons and approached this training program as a way to focus on connecting the psychological aspect to the medical aspect of the job. She created and presented a two-hour DDN training on diabetes and ways to balance these two aspects more evenly. She explained that diabetes has been an important topic to her and she continues to conduct some training in that area. Doris stated that she has been busy with the Employment Skills Program (ESP) which needs to be modeled around the state. She explained it is like Project Skills but for adults where VR pays the wages while learning new skills. Doris explained that she attended a ten week program on becoming a supervisor, and it was great. It focused on how to work with varying personalities in an organization and deal with ethical issues. She also participated in a case file review. Throughout this process, she has learned how advanced our state is in comparison to some others. We need to understand and appreciate that we do many things very well here in our state, and we need to toot our own horn. Doris added that she is thankful that South Dakota conducts a lot of pilot programs compared to other states.

Bernie thanked Doris for her continued hard work and for graduating from the Futures Initiative. He presented her with a personalized, engraved gift.

Next Bernie introduced Kim Christiansen from the Yankton Area VR Office. Kim explained that when she was approached about the Futures Initiative training program, she was hesitant because her goal was not to become a supervisor. Yet she realized it was more than that, it was about being a good leader, not only as a VR counselor, but a better leader in life, whether with co-workers, family, or other volunteer organizations. She added that she was very glad that she decided to do it. Kim explained that she helped with re-writing the VR computer program, VR FACES, which was a big workgroup. She joined the Yankton area SHRM Chapter which has

been very interesting to connect with employers. She helped conduct DDN trainings, participated with interviews and helped with the ESP program that Doris spoke of. She helped coordinate and develop the new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the mental health centers and presented at their trainings. Kim added that she attended a Liz Fabrino Training, and the Mental Health First Aid training. Bernie added that Kim also participated in an administrative review. Grady added that Kim has been a wonderful, long-standing employee with VR, and the Division has been guilty of bouncing her around from office to office. They appreciate her solid commitment to her work and thanked her for her service to VR.

Bernie congratulated Kim and thanked her for her continued hard work and for graduating from the Futures Initiative. He awarded her a personalized engraved gift. Grady added that the Futures graduates are not only growing in their own, all-around career knowledge, they are also growing within their respective communities. Thank you once more to all of the staff. Kathy extended a thank you to the VR Staff for putting the extra time and miles beyond work hours.

OTHER BUSINESS: Lyle announced that the Cheyenne River Vocational Rehabilitation program is conducting outreach efforts to surrounding Native American communities. He asked if he could tap into available resources, such as brochures and other educational materials to share with people. Lyle admitted that in the past, the big picture of how interconnected the VR world is, was less clear, but now that he's on three different boards and councils, it has become more clear. He is very interested in sharing details about the diabetes training that Doris Lamb mentioned, because diabetes is a major health concern for Native Americans.

General consensus was that yes, if people have such items, please share with Lyle for his outreach plans. Lyle thanked members for their generosity and said he would be in touch to gather needed materials. Grady thanked Lyle for asking and we all need to be aware of programs and opportunities and share this with individuals in need everywhere. He thanked Lyle for sharing not only his own VR program's details, but everyone's. Grady added that DRS is slowly building a video library of taped trainings and as they become available, the Division will share them.

CLOSING ACTIONS: Future Agenda Items: As previously mentioned, we'll include the proposed slate of officers, a draft of the provider survey being developed, a visit from the DOL staff to provide an update on the NCRC and any attempts to solve troubles that may be occurring, and try to reschedule a visit with DHS Secretary Gill.

Schedule Next Meeting: Some discussion occurred on having the Board meet two half days, like it has been or the possibility of going to a full day meeting like the SILC does. It was the consensus to keep the two, half day meetings. After checking, it was narrowed down to schedule the next meeting in Pierre/Fort Pierre, the week of September 26th – 28th. Staff will announce details as soon as plans are finalized.

Staff reminded members of today's YLF Luncheon at NSU and reviewed directions. Grady thanked everyone for their attendance and time, adding that he hopes to see everyone at the YLF Luncheon. Members thanked Craig for doing a great job as Chairperson in Elaine's absence. Craig also thanked everyone for coming to Aberdeen.

**CHAIRPERSON MOVED TO ADJOURN BY THE AGREEMENT OF ALL, MEETING
ADJOURNED AT 10:00 AM.**